

6  
PLAIN DEALING:

Or the whole Method of

1391. 6. 63

WOOL-SMUGGLING

CLEARLY DISCOVER'D,

And the Weakness of the LAWS  
in Force, put in a clear Light ;

WITH

Methods propos'd, and humbly sub-  
mitted to both Houses of Parlia-  
ment, by Way of Amendments to  
the **Wool Act**, that may effec-  
tually prevent *Wool Smuggling* for  
the future, without Expences to the  
Government.

---

By GEORGE BRIDGES,

*A Servant of his Majesty's.*

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for, and sold by ROBERT VINEY,  
Bookseller, at the *Bible* in the *Old Baily*,  
and at the *Royal-Exchange*, 1744.

(Price Six-pence.)





To His Excellent MAJESTY,

**G E O R G E II.**

*Of Great Britain, France, and Ireland,  
King, Defender of the Faith, &c.*

*Most gracious Sovereign,*

**T**HE following Lines being a Matter of great Importance, relating much to the Welfare of these Kingdoms, and to the Ruin and Downfall of *France*, I thought it a Duty incumbent on me at this Time, to cast my Mite into the Treasury, and in the humblest manner I am capable of, do crave Your Majesty's Royal Aid in favour of this Work, which, if complied with, and made Law, will be the only Means of enriching this Land ; but, most dread  
Sove-

## DEDICATION.

Sovereign, the greatest Difficulty of all, is to persuade Men to believe, I could wish I had that Art, Faith to this Day is much wanting ; however, as *Plain Dealing* is the high Way to *Faith*, I apprehend, to speak the Truth without Prevarication in a solemn plain Stile, is the only Method to convince Mankind in general, which I confess is what I have done, just as Experience and Practice led me on, without any Regard to the Frowns of my Enemies (the *Smugglers*). In all which I have dealt impartially, and doubt not Your Royal Majesty's favourable Approbation and Protection, in a Claim so just and beneficial to Your own Crown and Government. My LEIGE,

*I am, with the utmost Regard,*

*Your Leige's most dutiful,*

*and faithful Subject,*

GEORGE BRIDGES.





THE  
P R E F A C E.

Impartial Reader,

**I**F you can venture to believe me,  
*some Thousands of Clothiers, Dealers and Manufacturers of Wool, Worsted and Woollen Yarn all over Great Britain and Ireland, for the most part, either hath seen or heard of my Proposals, and do generally agree with me, if they were Law, it would answer the Design intended; and accordingly, they promised to use their utmost Endeavours with their respective Representatives in Parliament for its favourable Reception; I could also nominate several Peers and Noblemen of Distinction, that held them both expedient and practicable, that they should be made Law, and that whenever it came to a Vote, I*  
may

## The P R E F A C E.

*may depend on their Interest ; yet nevertheless, I cannot take upon me to please all Dispositions of Men, I know it is morally impossible, because we hug in our Bosoms the very Friends of France, who hath always opposed every thing of this Nature, that may tend to ruin the Trade of that Kingdom, while we suffer at home ; other Rabies also are seeking their own private Views and Self-Interest, and under specious Pretences of doing Good, hath endeavour'd to Hood-wink the Government, and then lay stumbling Blocks in the Way of the Weak, i. e. to make the Poor poorer, and to heap up Riches for themselves and their Posterity. But now the Day hath dawned, and, it's to be hoped, the Eyes of the Government are open'd, every Tree shall be known by its Fruit, and whether this Scheme be calculated for sinister Views, or whether for the National Good ?*

G. B.

# PLAIN DEALING:

Or the whole Method of

## WOOL-SMUGGLING

Clearly Discover'd, &c.

*Lords and Gentlemen,*



HE N the Way of Wool-Smuggling is clearly exhibited to you, as here I undertake to do, I humbly hope you will all agree with me, what an easy Thing it is to prevent that illicit Practice ; many are they who have wrote Proposals on this important Subject, nevertheless they have not written my Way, I write the Things my Eyes have seen, my Hands has handled, and my Feet hath trodden those Steps ; moreover, I know the very Men which are and were actually concerned in the very shipping of Wool and Yarn, almost all over *Great Britain* and

A 2

*Ireland ;*

*Ireland* ; their very Ware Rooms and Collars ; I know their Aiders and Abettors, and their Correspondants in *France* ; their Returns of our Wool in Brandy and Teas, and their Circular Letters, &c. Therefore from that Knowledge which must be conceived I have learned in so destructive a Trade, but few Men knows better how to shape out Methods to prevent them, than I can ; which, in regard to his Majesty, and the National Welfare, I shall lay before these honourable Houses ; that, which if comply'd with, shall make *England* the most richest and flourishing Kingdom in the known World ; and all this without oppressing the fair Trader, but strikes directly on the whole Bulk of the Transgressors, &c. And,

*First*, Let it be considered, there is but five Ways of Wool-Smuggling, and the most pernicious and chiefest Way of all is, when the Smugglers and Masters of Ships do meet together on purpose, and then and there contract their collusive Bargains, and send to the Sea-side large Quantities of Wool and Yarn in small Package, each Bag containing about one hundred and twenty Pounds Weight ; where it is received, cellar'd, and housed by Men of Fortune ; who have Boats built on purpose, and Servants  
and



and Under-tenants enough ready to Run on board all such Wool and Yarn, when a fair Wind offers, and the Ships ready, and so compleats their Intentions of carrying the same to *France*; to prevent which, the Laws in force cannot touch them; because, that ever since the Reign of King *Charles* the First, down to his present Majesty's Reign, the Penalty inflicted on Persons offending, chiefly consists on the Informant's proving the *Intention*. Mark here the Word *Intention*; which I mention twice, on purpose, that it might have the more Impression on your Minds: For, what Man living can swear to the *Intention* of another Man, untill he sees his *Intention* brought into Action: and then Action shapes out Matter and Form, by which the *Intention* is discovered: But, by the way, I must tell you it is then too late, the Ship is gone, the Wool and Yarn too, and the Smugglers in her. This is the Stone, which ever since the Peace of *Ryswick*, to this Day, that all our Wool Acts of Parliament split upon; that is in proving the *Intention*, which is morally impossible, and is nothing at all to us, now the Wool is gone, and the Smugglers with it. But, perhaps, you will say, they'll return again. I answer, no; not to that Place, until the Time limited by the Act be expired, and then no Body can hurt them, and so much for

for this Weakness of our Wool-Act ; but to remedy this, a Law might be made after the following Manner, *viz.*

*First*, That no Owner of Wool or Yarn, or other Person or Persons employed to carry the same, shall presume to remove the said Wool or Yarn by Land-Carriage, without first getting a Permit from a proper Officer, appointed in that Parish or Market-Town, to attend his Office for that Purpose, under the Penalty and Forfeiture of the Loss of the said Wool or Yarn, together with the Horses, Carts, and Tackling, or any other sort of Cattle whatever, carrying the same.

*Note*, The Advantage that would flow to the Interest of this Nation, by this Method, would vastly out - balance the Trouble it would give the fair Trader ; by which Means, and no other, we shall overcome the Wool-Smugglers.

*Secondly*, That no Permit be granted to any such Person or Persons whatever, but upon Oath ; and the Questions to be put to them in these following Words : *First*, Is this Wool or Yarn your own Property ? *Secondly*, Is this a true Invoice and Number of Packs and Carriages ? *Thirdly*, Is your *Intention* for shipping it, to cross the Seas, or any one for your use ? *Fourthly*, Is this the first Permit  
for

for the said Wool or Yarn ? And, *Fifthly*, From whence did you bring it ; and whither must it go ?

*Note*, This, at one View, quite turns the Scale, from hurting the fair Trader, on the Wool-Smuggler ; for the Smugglers by this Rule must now make Oath to the grand Word, the *Intention* ; which formerly was put upon us to prove.

*Thirdly*, That the only Persons to administer this Oath, and to grant Permits to save Expences, are the Excise ; because the Excise are to be had almost in every Market Town : And, if the Government thinks it proper, they may minute all original Permits in Books to be kept for that Purpose ; because this would tell all the yearly Encrease and Decrease of all the Wool in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, without registering of Fleeces, Sheep or Lambs, &c. as some were for promoting.

*Fourthly*, That Riding and Coast-Officers be empowered to visit and inspect twice or thrice a Week, all suspected Houses by the Sea side, or within five or ten Miles of the same, to examine their Permits, and to view their Wool and Yarn ; and in case of Refusal of Keys, to open Ware-houses, Rooms, Cellars, Chests, Casks, Cases, Trunks, Hampers, or Fats, &c. That it might be lawful to break them open, because, by virtue of  
Presses

Presses and Sernes, in such Package, may be stowed vast Quantities of Comb Wool, Worsted and Cruel, &c.

*Note,* By the way, this prevents Tea-Smuggling in a great measure, as well as to catch them, and would be of infinite Service to the fair Trader, and to his Majesty.

*Fifthly,* That all Receivers and Harbourers of Wool or Yarn, for a clandestine Market, forfeit on Conviction, to the Informant, all their Goods and Chattels; and that their own Servants and Under-tenants, whom they employ, for any other Person or Persons, knowing the same, may be entitled to seize, inform and prosecute, as well as the King's Officers; because these Sort of People are our very worst and grossest Enemies; for had we no such Receivers, we should have no such Running of Wool.

*Note,* Also, here are Numbers of Officers made without Expence to the Government, and a Law that would reach the Smuggler, and execute itself without prejudicing the fair Trader in any wise.

*Sixthly,* That all his Majesty's Subjects, that now are, or may hereafter be Inhabitants in *France*, or elsewhere beyond the Seas, on seeing Wool or Yarn brought from those Dominions into foreign Parts, be intitled, by Act of Parliament, to return home  
within



within the Space of Twelve Calender Months, and to lodge their Informations against any of the said Offenders, and shall not only recover the Ship, with all her Tackling and Furniture, but likewise all their Goods and Chattels.

*Note,* If this was Law, it would do no Harm to the fair Trader in the least, but strikes directly on the Smugglers, and no one else ; besides, it makes our Countrymen who hath fled for Debt, &c. his Majesty's Officers in foreign Parts to return home, and may be good Subjects, and of great Service.

A second Way of Wool-Smuggling, is when sundry Persons in inland Rivers, do load their Wool and Yarn on board flat-bottom'd Boats, Barges, Hookers and Lighters, &c. under Pretence of carrying the same to Market, and so by Virtue of Sluices and Hutches, are let down Rivers into Navigable Harbours of the Sea, and then put their Loading in other Vessels hovering on the Coast, bound for *France*. To prevent which,

*Seventhly,* A Law may be made, That all such Person or Persons whatsoever, shall be liable to the Loss of the said Wool and Yarn, Boats and Barges, &c. unless they first take out a License and pass Bonds, as in the present Law made for Shipping of Wool and Yarn from *Ireland* to *England*, and from

*England to Scotland, and Certificates to be returned, &c.*

*Note,* This would give a deep Wound to the Wool-Smuggler, be he ever so cunning, and gives no extraordinary Trouble to the fair Trader.

A third Way of illicit trafficking in this sort, is this ; that when certain Masters of Ships, after being cleared from the Custom-House, do weigh Anchor in the Night-time, having their Confederates ready on Shore in sundry Places in the River or Rivers, do send on board Numbers of small Pockets and Bags of combed Wool, Worsted and Cruel, with Boxes, Cases, Casks and Chests filled with the same, where they are received and carried to *France*, as aforesaid. To prevent which,

*Eighthly,* Let Tidemen be boarded on all such Ships and other Vessels bound for *France, Flanders, Holland, Denmark, &c.* and to have Tucks at the King's Expence, and to suffer no By-boat whatever to bring Goods on board, without producing Entries sign'd by a proper Officer belonging to the Custom-House, and in case they have none, that all such Goods be liable to be seized, and be the Property of the said Officers.

*Note,* This brings no Clog or Charge of new Officers to the King or Government,  
and

and seems like a Death Wound to this Way of Smuggling.

A fourth Way of Smuggling, is when a Number of Merchants here, as well as in other Parts, do pack up their Goods with Screws and Press together, in great Bails, vast Quantities of Comb-Wool, Worsted and Cruel, and under the Denominations of Bale Goods and Draperies, in that Shape are sent to the Custom-House Keys, entered and passed over slightly by the Searchers, perhaps with a Hum, and so inadvertently boarded and conveyed to Parts beyond Sea, greatly to the King's Prejudice. To prevent which, be pleased to observe,

*Ninthly*, A Law might be made, that no Merchant, or other Person or Persons whatever, shall pack up any manner of Bale Goods, whether in Bags, Sacks, Packs, Cases, Trusses, Vats, Chests, Trunks, Bundles, Hogsheads, Pipes, Barrels, &c. or into any other Vessel or Package whatever, with an Intent to ship them on board any Vessel or Vessels, bound for *France, Flanders, Holland, Denmark* or *Norway*, &c. without first giving Notice to the Searchers at their Office, that proper Officers may stand by to view the said Package, under the Penalty of having the said Goods opened again at the Custom-House Keys, at his or their own Expences.

*Note*, This is another deep Wound to the Smugglers ; but to the fair Trader, no Offence at all, for the Upright are as bold as a Lion.

A fifth Way of Smuggling, is carried on by a Sett of Men who fill their Baggage and Portmantua's with skeaned Worsted and Cruels of divers Colours, &c. and do watch the short Traders outward bound for *France*, *Flanders* and *Holland*, who without Ceremony, go on board those Ships as Passengers, whose Lugage passes for Wearing Apparel and Working Tools, &c. so thus they deceive and out-wit the very Captains they sail with, and bring back their Returns in Tea's with other Commanders, in the same manner, and are put ashore on the Coast by Fishermen, or other Coasting Boats or Vessels, &c. To prevent which,

*Tenthly*, A Law may be made, that all Receivers, Harbourers and Encouragers of Teas and Brandy Smuggling, in whose Custody the same shall be found, shall forfeit on Conviction to the Informant, all their Goods and Chattels ; and that it might be made a Law, that the Receiver might seize, and not pay the Proprietor for his Tea or Brandy, and that the Proprietor may inform against this Receiver for harbouring his said Tea or Brandy, one against the other, and Trustees



Trustees and Servants against both, and bring the same to his Majesty's next Warehouse, and receive the Benefit as the Law now directs on that behalf.

*Note,* If this was Law, it would be a House divided against itself, and a thing impossible it could stand, and a very great Relief to the fair Trader, and a deep Wound to the Smuggler, by making every one Officers, without any Charge or Expence to the Government.

Here I think it a Duty incumbent on me to give your Honours a further Hint on this important Subject, *Tea*, which is smuggled three different Ways ; the First I have spoken of as above ; the Second is, when the *East-India* Ships falls in with our Coasts, and then smuggled by the Seamen and their Assistants. But the Third and worst of all is, when Tea's are shipped off here on Deben-ture, and then run in again upon us, to the great Prejudice of his Majesty and the fair Trader. To prevent which, be pleased to give strict Orders, that the Searchers belonging to the Customs shall at the same time they board Teas, board Tidemen along with it ; and not to postpone it till ten or twelve Days after, or perhaps never ; a Thing too much practis'd by them, under Pretence of saving his Majesty the Charge  
of

of Tidemen's Pay. Hum—fulfilling the old Proverb, *Saving it in at the Tap-hole, and letting it out at Bung-hole*; which occasioned me to write to the Honourable the Commissioners of his Majesty's Customs on that Account. The Substance is as follows, viz.

Jan. 11, 1742.

*From on Board the Oliver, Thomas Collet, for the West-Indies, now lying at Shadwel-Dock.*

*May it please your Honours,*

**Y**esterday we were boarded here by our Surveyor, as I suppose, to guard against the relanding Debenture Goods; but what sort they are, Quantity or Quality, we cannot tell; it seems they were boarded last Week. The Officers of the next Ship tells us, that they were five Chests of Tea's; and for ought we know they may be here yet. We rummaged heartily to find them out, but could not. The Mate says they are stowed out of sight; I believe so too, and that they have got them ashore out of all our Sights: Therefore I thought it my Duty to acquaint your Honours, that you might not be deceived, nor his Majesty no longer imposed upon.

*I am, &c.*

G. B.

*Lastly*, In regard to IRELAND, let it be considered what a plentiful Share of good Wool they have, as well as we, and how that all the Laws *England* ever formed for them concerning Wool or Woollen Manufactories, availed nothing; you see they will not be prevailed upon to put them in Execution. Why I answer, because they do not like them, they are not made for their Interest, therefore my humble Opinion is, it's better to allow *Ireland* a Share, or an Interest in Trade, than to suffer ourselves to be imposed upon any longer, a thing we cannot help, yet it should be on those Conditions, that they should not hurt the Trade of this Kingdom, which, I conceive, may be easily done after this Manner :

*Eleventhly*, A Law may be made, that *Ireland* be admitted to a free Trade, of all her Woollen Manufactories, on Condition of paying a Duty of Ten *per Cent. ad valorem* at Exportation, and that Money so paid by the *Irish* be reimbursed to the *English* as a Debeture or Draw-back on their Exportation, and this will raise the Price of the *Irish* Goods, and lessen the Price of the *English*, so that it will be impossible for them to hurt us in foreign Markets; besides, this will be a Means of uniting them to us, which before was the Cause of their  
In-

Inveteracy, which said Gaul of Bitterness took its first Rise from the Peace made at *Ryswick*, when the *Irish* gave up their Trade to *England*, in Lieu of a National Debt, occasioned by the last Wars in that Kingdom.

*Lords and Gentlemen,*

**I**N the humblest manner I present these few Lines to your View, and you all are wise enough to see that the Laws in Force will not do, yet I confess there are many good Clauses in them which ought to be continued (which I could mention) and also many other needless Clauses, that may be loped off. I would not be understood as if I was for cancelling all the old, but a part ; and in their room could wish these few Things, by way of Amendment, were inserted, wherein you would soon find the Difference. This I am positive of ; because it would have prevented me when I followed that pernicious Traffick, who was Nine Years a Practitioner, and never was detected ; moreover, I must not forget to acquaint your Honours, that there is but one Way to prevent Wool-Smuggling, and not two, and that all the Wool that is shipped off from hence to *Scotland*, *Alderney*, *Guernsey* and *Serk*, &c. is not wrought up in them Countries, as some  
imagine,



imagine, but quite the reverse, is Smuggled  
 to *France, Flanders, and Holland, &c.* which  
 said illicit Practice is the Reason that sinks  
 the Price of our Wool here. By mixing of  
 our Wool with the *French*, encreaseth great  
 Plenty with them, and cheap; that, together  
 with the Cheapness of *French* Labour, is the  
 Reason they undersell us in foreign Markets,  
 and makes the Price of our Wool fall: Keep  
 but *English* and *Irish* Wool from them, and  
 then they cannot make, with their own  
 Wool alone, Goods that bears any Compari-  
 son with the *English*: By which Means our  
 Woollen Manufactures will sell Abroad, and  
 beat out the *French*, and cause such a Demand  
 for Wool at Home, amongst ourselves, that  
 we should be obliged to other Nations, be-  
 sides *Spain*, for that Commodity. Remem-  
 ber, and look back to the last War we had  
 with *France*, and likewise when the Plague  
 raged in *Marseilles*, as well as at this pre-  
 sent Time, and see the Price of Wool. *A*  
*Word to the Wise is enough.* And were  
 those few Clauses but made into a Law, it  
 would reach them as well as us: Besides, it  
 is not my single Opinion that it would have  
 the desired Effect, but Thousands of others  
 besides me, thinks so too. Nor am I seek-  
 ing Fee or Reward of Lords or Commons  
 for my Trouble or Expence, as others do:

C

That

That I refer to your Honours Generosity and Clemency. I seek the National Good, the Landed Interest, the Return of our Subjects, and Trade, the Employment of the Poor, the Welfare of his Majesty and Protestant Succession ; and do rest, with the utmost Respect,

*Your Honours most dutiful*

*And faithful Servant,*

GEORGE BRIDGES.

*When Wool is kept at Home,  
The Markets for it rise ;  
But when Abroad its gone,  
Here Markets falls and dies.*



## Advertisement.

**T**O all who have Occasion. The Author hereof *George Bridges*, having been a Traveller, hath found out an effectual Experiment, being a Secret for destroying those infectious Vermin call'd *Buggs*, whether in Walls, Wainscots, Ships, Beds, Bedsteads, Testers, Ceilings, Hangings, &c. without defacing the Furniture, or leaving any loathsome Scent behind.

*Note*, He lives at the *Crown* in *Maudling's Rents*, *East Smithfield*, and will attend to destroy those Vermin at the following Prices, *viz.* Five Shillings for a Plain Bedstead, Ten Shillings for a Bedstead with Mouldings and Raised Tester, Chambers of a middling Size, for a Guinea each ; and Cabbins of Ships, a Guinea each.

# Advertisement

O all who have Occasion. The An-  
 nual Fair of George Briggs, having  
 been a Failure, has found out an effect-  
 ual Expedient, being a sort of destroying  
 those notions of a Fair, which  
 that in Walls, Windows, Shop, Bed,  
 Stairs, Tables, Lamps, Hangings, &c.  
 without touching the Furniture, or leaving  
 any furniture soiled behind.

Now, He lives at the Green in Alford.  
 Mr's Briggs, Ask for him, and will at-  
 tend to destroy those notions at the follow-  
 ing Price, one Five Shillings for a Plain  
 Bedstead, Ten Shillings for a Bedstead with  
 Mattress and Bolster, Chambers or  
 a Bedstead, for each; and  
 a Chamber for each a Chamber each.





